

Taking the "Rhythms"



"Pretty girls, clad in the lightest and blissest manner, dance about the woodland glades like nymphs and dryads."

THE fashion of shedding superfluous clothes, in order to get back to nature, has spread widely over this country during the past Summer.

Our woods have revealed many a charming archaic scene, suggesting the play of the nymphs and fauns in Greek mythology. It simply means that our social leaders and debutantes are "practicing the rhythms" and getting back to nature.

The great secret of acquiring a strong and beautiful body, according to those who teach "rhythms," is to move rhythmically. The elementary way to acquire rhythm is to move naturally, like the animals. The most perfect form of rhythm is obtained by a beautiful dance.

Now you will understand what is happening when you see lightly clad young women engaged in graceful dances, while others are hopping about, running and leaping, grunting and squealing like young animals.

All of them are as lightly dressed as weather and the circumstances permit. They usually wear a light, loose robe reaching to about the knee. They go with feet, ankles and arms entirely uncovered. They wear nothing to restrain their movements at the throat or waist. When they want to walk on the road they may wear sandals without stockings, but as a rule they go completely barefooted.

Have you ever watched an animal at play and realized how perfectly graceful and rhythmical its movements are? Many persons have never thought of doing such a simple thing. Then let them compare the movements of the ordinary woman, bound up in her corsets, her high-heeled shoes and all the other paraphernalia of fashion and civilization.

Interesting Developments of Fashionable Society's Newest Back-to-Nature Fad That Seem to Get Almost as Far Back as Possible

Think how different from the ordinary woman is the squirrel, gracefully leaping from bough to bough of the tree and cracking a nut when he finds one. His movements are the embodiment of grace and rhythm.

Even the common house cat gives us a wonderful example of grace and rhythm. Observe her as she chases a bird or stretches luxuriously in the sun or balances herself delicately on the back fence. The dog is equally a model of rhythm, although his motions are different. In the country dogs are often kept off old-fashioned wooden bridges because the perfectly rhythmic movement of the dog when running is liable to shake down the bridge.

All animals have something to teach the woman who wishes to be perfectly graceful. It is worth while sometimes to lie on your stomach and wriggle around like a seal. There are even women who might take a valuable hint from the hippopotamus.

One of the places where the "rhythms" have been taught is conducted by Mrs. Florence Fleming Noyes, at Peterboro, N. H.

In the depth of the Peterboro woods you will find the Greek god Pan, who ruled over the animals, playing his pipes.

By learning to move rhythmically a person cultivates the mind as well as the body. "When we cultivate the sympathetic nervous system through the right use of rhythmic movements we will be capable of great things in creative art," explained Mrs. Noyes, "since all the beauty which we feel and to which we respond registers on the brain. No less an authority than G. Stanley Hall, of Clark University, bears me out in this theory and maintains that the cultivation and appreciation of the beautiful has a very definite scientific value in the develop-

ment of the brain, and influences its output to an extent little realized in this materialistic age.

"Our garb here is not so much to imitate the Greeks as it is to give the body perfect freedom of movement and expression. To attempt to express rhythmic emotions in modern fashionable attire would be absurd. Just the moment one throws aside ordinary clothing and puts on this little costume one gets immediately into the atmosphere we want. Not a muscle is bound or hampered, not an articulation contracted. We are at last natural and free to move and act and be as God and nature intended us to be. It is positively amazing how quickly a pupil becomes natural and rhythmic under the influence of the costume and the closeness to nature.

"You see, it isn't that we have so much to learn to acquire rhythm; it is a matter of laying aside all our stiff-necked Puritanism and forgetting the artificialities which wrong training and false ideals have developed in all of us. We must get back to child movements and animal rhythms, to natural gestures and free motion.

"Children and animals are absolutely lacking in self-consciousness. It is that child-like simplicity for which we are striving, and while there is the greatest opportunity for individuality in lyric-rhythmic expression, there is no room in it for personality. Drama develops personality. This art submerges it. There is no reason why the human body cannot be made as undulating as a serpent, as capable of as perfect rhythmic rotary movements as a wasp, as relaxed and as responsive as a cat.

"To acquire rhythm one must cultivate one's second brain. Below the breast and just above the waist are two distinct and

separate articulations and two others at either side. The Greeks developed these, and that accounts for the grace of the figures found in all Greek friezes—figures walking or dancing, apparently straight ahead, but the body curved back above the waist line.

"I remember a musician who used to say at certain passages: 'Now I am thinking with my knees.' This only sounded like foolishness to foolish people, who know nothing of the body-brain; but this second brain is so necessary to musicians that it is sometimes called the 'musical brain,' and no one can be a really great performer who does not possess something of it."

Young women from all over the country have been practicing this new method of becoming beautiful, and it is hoped that we shall see some interesting results in society this Winter.

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Miss Mildred Anderson, of Washington, D. C., as "Pan" Playing the Shepherd's Pipes in the Depths of the Forest.



Another Picture of "Pan."



Miss Margaret King as "Bacchus" and Miss Winifred Lawrence as "Bacchante."

We Waste One-Fifth of Our Babies

AMERICAN doctors have lately pointed out that one-fifth of all the babies born in the United States die in their infancy from preventable diseases.

Dr. Joseph Pattee Cobb, dean of the Hahnemann Medical College of Chicago, in an address before the Bureau of Pediatrics on "Infant Feeding," started his hearers when he declared: "There are born in the United States two-and-a-half million babies each year; half a million, or one-fifth of this number die before they are a year old. One-fourth of all deaths from all causes are of infants during their first year of life; of these 60 per cent are due to gastro-intestinal diseases, while at least 20 per cent more have digestive disturbances as contributory factors in their ill health. In other words, one-fifth of all deaths from all causes are of infants under one

year of age and these are due to one preventable cause.

"Can we point with pride to the methods employed in the average household during the second and third year of life? Summer morbidity is due to improper feeding and if the resistance of the child in the second year was as low as it was during the first, the mortality would be higher in the second year. Neither the profession nor the laity have been generally aroused to the importance of systematic feeding for the second and third year."

Dr. Anson Cameron, of Chicago, chairman of the Bureau of Pediatrics, outlined infant welfare work of the present time. "This is the golden age of the child," he said. "Our largest national asset is the sound young human unit. Each baby is a living factory of possibilities. The expense of saving 8,000 babies who needlessly die every year in New York City is no greater than the ex-

penses of burying them."

The statements of these two doctors appear to be a contradiction, but they are not really so. The possibilities of saving infant life are far greater than they ever were before, but they are not put fully into use among the poorer people and in the crowded parts of our great cities.

"Bacchus" Surprises "Bacchante."

"It seems unreasonable that reformers should complain of the falling birthrate when the lives of vast numbers of the children born are needlessly wasted," says Dr. C. Holt Lambert, the well-known specialist on children's diseases. "Why should poor people bring more children into the world, when it seems certain that

many of them will lose their lives from preventable causes? We must first see that this shocking waste of child life is stopped and then discuss the question of larger families. In the meantime, the duty of increasing the population rests primarily on the well-to-do, who are alone able to obtain proper care for their children."

